



Family Readiness Program Newsletter

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www.il.ngb.army.mil/familyreadiness

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From the Editor:

Welcome to the newsletter's second year. This is a little different format. Hopefully, most of your computers can open this without much difficulty.

With income tax season just around the corner, I thought I'd forward some information regarding tax filing. The website for the IRS is www.irs.gov and the website for the Illinois Department of Revenue is www.revenue.state.il.us. For those of you living outside Illinois, your state's website can be obtained by searching Google for your state and/or government websites.

Both the feds and the state have interactive websites and both offer free tax assistance. Illinois offers Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites (VITA sites) where in-person tax assistance is available. Check out both websites for a list of the sites closest to you.

A few of this year's changes are:

- Uniform Definition of a Qualifying Child
- Inflation Adjustments for 2005
- Standard Mileage Rates Increased
- Contributions Raided for IRAs and other Retirement Plans
- Contribution Limits Raised for IRAs and other Retirement Plans
- Automatic Six-Month Tax-Filing Extension Available

As this office receives more information regarding the filing of federal and state taxes, we will forward to all of you. Happy Tax Season!

Janetta Clemons
Family Assistance Center Liaison
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Coordinator's Corner

Upcoming Family Readiness Events

It's hard to tell from the weather outside, but spring is right around the corner, and with spring comes our annual State Family Readiness Conference! This year's conference will be at the Crowne Plaza right here in Springfield, IL, from 21-23 April. We have a great lineup of speakers and events, including Bruce Lockley from Survivor: Amazon. Friday night will begin with a reception here at Camp Lincoln at the Illinois State Military Museum. Saturday morning will be an opportunity to hear from our guest speakers. Then we will divide up into smaller groups for our break-out session training. This year's topics include Stress Management and an exciting Team-Building exercise.

Saturday night it's time to dress up and enjoy the great food during the National Guard Association of Illinois' Banquet and Ball. There will be music, dancing, and a hospitality room. Finally, Sunday morning will be an opportunity to discuss some ideas for the future of the Family Program.

This year will also include our second annual Youth Conference! We invite Guard youth, ages 11-18, to attend and learn how to be leaders among their local peers. They will receive training on leadership and character, as well as opportunities to share with other military youth. Of course, they will also have a lot of fun events too!!

For more information, and registration forms, please check out our website at: www.il.ngb.army.mil/familyreadiness/conferenceinfo. We look forward to seeing everyone this April!

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In the meantime, the State Family Readiness Office will be hosting the first of a series of Regional Family Readiness Group (FRG) training workshops. These workshops will focus on establishing and managing an effective Family Readiness Group, with specific training targeting FRG Leaders, Treasurers, Secretaries, and Communications/ Phone Tree Chairs. We would also like to invite the Family Readiness Liaison (or Rear Detachment Commander) or another representative from each unit.

The first workshop is focused on Southern Illinois and is scheduled for 17-18 FEB 06 at Rend Lake Lodge near Mt. Vernon, IL. Future workshops will be scheduled for Central and Northern Illinois (dates to be determined). Please check out the registration form at www.il.ngb.army.mil/familyreadiness, and feel free to contact SFC Holdman if you have any questions.

Major Joseph Schweickert
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From the Field:

182d Airlift Wing, Peoria

In Remembrance - Our condolences go to the family of Senior Airman Steven Weber and the 182 Aerial Port Flight members. On 3 December 2005, Airman Weber passed away in an accident on his way to drill. Stephen forever touched the lives of many people and will always be remembered.

Patriotic Christmas Tree - Thank you to our unit members MSgt Michael & SSgt Rhiannon Killen for this wonderful tree. They conducted a charity auction for Make a Wish Foundation. When this tree came up on the auction block, the Killen's out bid everyone else, and the tree is now on display in the lobby of Headquarters, Building 628. This tree will make a wonderful display for years to come.



Here comes Santa Claus! - On 3 December 2005, the 182 AW held our annual Children's Christmas Party. Fun was had by all. The Family Readiness Group did a great job with the food. There wasn't much left.

Santa & Mrs. Claus love to pose for the camera whether alone or with a family. The children also loved the toys he brought with him. Santa needed the elves to stay at his workshop at the North Pole. So, he enlisted the 182 AW Student Flight to play elves for the day. Their teamwork was greatly appreciated and made for the success of the party.



Our community support for the troops is never ending. The family office was contacted by several individuals who wanted to provide Holiday Cheer to our members and their families. These individuals work together, belong to an organization, or are a group of friends. Their generosity is very much appreciated. The USO also provided Holiday

Cheer by donating Ham Baskets to 20 of our families.

182d Airlift Wing Members Assist with Toys for Tots - On Thursday, December 15, 2005, members of the 182d Airlift Wing assisted the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation with their annual toy distribution. The hours of distribution were from 8 am to 8 pm, and our members volunteered to work from 9 am to 4 pm.

In order to be eligible, families in the Peoria area sign up with our local Salvation Army. This event provides toys for those children who otherwise would not receive a gift for Christmas. On the day of distribution, about 60 families passed through the line per hour. Overall, approximately 4,000 children in the Tri-County area will receive a gift as part of the Toys for Tots charity.

Leading up to the toy distribution, volunteers sort the toys by age groups, and as the families come in to the distribution center, they are escorted by a volunteer to assist on the layout of the ages. At these tables, volunteers assist in picking out gifts available for a certain age. Our own elf escort this year was MSgt. Daniel Svymbersky. He has participated for the last 20 years.

Other members assisted in helping prepare stocking stuffers and putting together the family gift. The stocking stuffers consisted of about 10 little gifts for a child. Our elves for this year were 1LT Shannon Johnston, MSgt Matthew Stone, TSgt Jay Heimann, TSgt Glen Louthan, TSgt Samantha Yanez, SSgt Jakob Pogeman, and SSgt Benjamin Webb.

Thank you to each of you for supporting the Peoria Community.

Troop and Family Counseling Services - Mark Querry & Angie Geier, Life Consultants for Health Net will be available during January UTA at the Chapel from 0900 – 1600 on Saturday, 7 January and 0700 – 1500 on Sunday, 8 January. This is a confidential & free service offered by the DoD. They are available to consult on any life issues, but they specialize in deployment and reunion for the military.

These services are open to all servicemembers and their family who may be in need of their assistance. At this time, no appointment is necessary. Life Consultants will be available during the following UTA weekends: 7-8 January, 2-5 March, 3-4 June, & 14-15 October. If anyone has questions for servicemembers in the Peoria area, please call me or have the member contact me for more information.

Amy Quimby

Amy.quimby@ilpeor.af.mil

Chicago – Donnelly

Whew! We made it through another busy Holiday season. Let's hope 2006 brings us all much health and happiness and safety to our soldiers.

I would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to St. Elizabeth Seton Church in Naperville for providing Christmas gifts to some of our families that needed a little extra help over the holidays. And a special thank you to Ellen Lucke for coordinating everything. Your generosity was truly appreciated.

Most of our Special Forces soldiers deployed out of this armory made it home for a 10 day visit with their families for the holidays. Now they are headed for their mission overseas. Please keep them and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

The January FRG meeting for our C205th Med. group has been cancelled. The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 5, 2pm at the North Riverside armory. Please try to attend. The group needs your support and ideas.

Welcome to all the new volunteers for the FRG for the 933rd MP unit. I look forward to meeting all of you soon and working with you to get your FRG going strong again.

That's about it for now. Happy New Year to all!

Kathy Kozak

Kathy.kozak@us.army.mil

Decatur Family Assistance Center

Hello from the Decatur Family Assistance Center. First I would like to say welcome to our newest FRG leaders, Megan Dowding and Kathy Wallig. Megan has accepted the role as the FRG leader for the new 766th ENG BN. Kathy for the 33rd IN BCT. Thank you ladies for taking on such a challenging and rewarding job.

The past month has consisted of many holiday parties, but for the next few months in my area we will be focusing on reunion for the 2-130! Please make sure you attend one of the briefs. Remember it does not have to be for your unit but can be the brief closest to you. More information will be available from your FRG as time get closer.

Until next time, be safe.

Kelly Rund

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From the Crestwood Armory:



4 December 2005. Family Holiday Meal/Gift Giving at the armory. An excellent time was had by all. The expression on faces of the soldiers, their families and their children tells it all.

10 December 2005, Family Holiday VTC Day. This was a very emotional time, but rewarding. To see the families connect with their soldier via VTC was For them to see, hear, and talk to each other for all. The families that did attend were so grateful to the Guard that this was able to be them feel that Family Readiness is a must. families even agreed to come to the next FRG extremely happy about that.

17 December 2005, (sorry I don't have event) the USO/Santa Clause Anonymous AWESOME! These organizations made "What I Christmas" happen for 150 of our soldiers' expression on the faces of those children and one of awe. On that note, I want to thank the organizations and individuals that supported our families for the holiday season: The USO, Santa Clause Anonymous, American Legion, Genworth Financial, St. Elizabeth Seton Church of Naperville, IL, Ms. Trinita Hagen, House of Hope Social Service Department; Mr. Ken Chapman of Naperville, Mrs. Dolores Petersen Girl Scout Troop #234. There are so many others. I want to say THANKS, to all of them.



To see the families awesome in itself. was an experience thankful and done, made a lot of Some of the meeting. I was

pictures of this Christmas Party. want for children. The their parents was following

Anna La Mar

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Machesney Park Family Assistance Center

Welcome to the New Year!!!!

Events

Event on December 19th at Bubba Gump's- Navy Pier by the USO



Agenda:

7:30am Pick up families from Machesney Park Armory
9:00am Stop in Lake Villa, IL to pick up families
11:00am Arrive at Navy Pier
11:00am-1:00pm Lunch at Bubba Gump's
1:00-2:15pm Visit Santa and free time at Navy Pier
2:20-4:00pm IMAX Movie: Polar Express
4:00-5:00pm Free time at Winter Wonder fest
5:00pm Depart Navy Pier for home

Christmas Jazz Trio



FRG News and contact Information:

333rd MP Freeport: Had a Holiday Party December 11, 2005. New Family Readiness Liaison Lt. Keel. If interested in helping out the FRG contact: tonykeel@earthlink.net

Co D 1-178 Woodstock:

Jill Winling at jwinling@Kraft.com and Lisa Guerrero at jfglag898@sbcglobal.net

HHC 33D BSTB Machesney Park:

Kelley Bernhart New FRG Leader. Welcome aboard!!!! kasbpeace@yahoo.com

244ALT Machesney Park/North West: Cindy Castle, Leader at ccastle@inwave.com

January 7, 2006 3:00 p.m. Holiday Party at 2015 Barnaby Drive Upcoming packaging to soldiers.

Btry C 2-122 D FA (A 2/122 FA) Sycamore: Kelly Upton, FRG Leader at upton23@verizon.net

1644th Trans Rock Falls:

Karin Murphy, FRG Leader ckmurphy934@yahoo.com
Drill back February 11-12, 2006 VA Fair 2/11/06 0900-1300

C 1-178 (C/1-131 CAV) Aurora: The FRG Leader for Aurora and Waukegan. Howard Reddick at pegghow@theramp.net

135 CM Co Machesney Park: Anyone interested in helping with a new FRG, please contact the Armory and leave a message with the office or the FAC representative.

B/1-131 CAV Dixon: TBA

HHSB 2-123 FA Milan:

Had a reunion brief December 3rd and the unit expected to be home in January 2006.

Angela Snyder at ArmyWife1477@mchsi.com or Katie Coons rkkrt5@yahoo.com

Sue Warneke

Sue.a.warneke@us.army.mil

Springfield Family Assistance Center

Hello from The Springfield FAC located in the now open Soldier Support Center. We are all excited to be a part of the Support Center since taking care of soldiers and their families is what makes us tick. In order to be a true one-stop shop, we are working hard to be a team, to learn enough about each Department represented here that we can get you an answer, or a point of contact that will have a resolution, or resource for soldiers' & family members' questions and problems in order to help resolve issues as soon as possible. We are striving as a team to become a true one-stop shop. In February, we will have all stations represented on both First and Third Drill weekend. If you are a full timer needing your record updated, if you are a student needing information from Education and Incentives branch, need a passport, or ID card, DEERS update for the newest addition to the Family or need Family Assistance we can help. Please feel free to call our 800 number: 1-800-732-8868 or email the help desk @ ILNGSC@il.ngb.army.mil if you are on the RCAS system. The direct number is: (217) 761-3936 or DSN: 555-3936. The direct number to my desk is still: (217) 761-3335.

I am also excited to have the Bravo Battery 2/123 FA return to the Macomb Illinois Armory. They arrived in the wee hours of the night and were overwhelmed by the large amount of Community members that turned out regardless of the hour to Welcome Home the Returning Heroes! The Milan armory had a large turnout for the A 2/123 FA Returning Heroes there as well! I look forward to spring and summer the time frame when the rest of the 123, C CO Galesburg and HHSB Milan Armory's report the same Heroes Welcome will be complete. Job well done to the soldiers and the family members during this bittersweet deployment and redeployment. Let us keep Janet and Kylee Wehrly in our thoughts and prayers and remember Kyle Wehrly always in our hearts. Remember the Frainer family as well: Tim, Tif, and Mackenzie. Tim was injured in the same incident.

I hope to have pictures and details regarding a Grand Opening of the Soldier Support Center soon. Happy Valentines Day from the Springfield Family Assistance Center!

Anita Yakle

Anita.j.yakle@us.army.mil

From Our Youth Coordinator:

Are you a youth between the age of 13-18?

Do you like helping other youth?

Have you experienced a deployment or about to?

Can you attend a training session for one weekend and help out two weekends a month at Military Clubs in your neighborhood?

If you can, we are looking for you. Illinois National Guard Child Youth Services is looking for Regional Youth representatives and FRG youth representatives. Regional representatives will sit on Illinois TEEN Panel and represent the youth of Illinois National Guard. FRG representatives will represent their FRG and be the voice of that FRG Youth.

Do you like to have fun and support your soldier, meet other youth who are experiencing the same thing as you? Do you like to be a leader? Then contact Anne Kessler, Child Youth Services Coordinator for more information and for vacancies in your area. Email Anne.kessler1@us.army.mil or call 217-622-0143.

Lewis & Clark Youth Rendezvous National Guard 2006 Youth Rendezvous Essay Contest

Write an essay about Lewis and Clark and their famous expedition of discovery and win a FREE trip to North Dakota. You will be able to walk the trail in their footsteps to experience the same American Indian culture and see the same landscapes they did over 200 years ago.

The contest is open to Juniors and Seniors 2006-2007 school year. Essay submissions are accepted from November 12 2005 through February 28th 2006. For more information and to submit your entry online, visit www.lcyouthrendezvous.com and look for a poster coming to your local armory.

Anne Kessler

Child/Youth Coordinator

Anne.kessler1@us.army.mil